land to private parties for development during 1995-96.

(e) Does not arise.

Proposal *to* raise water charges for Industry

4543. SHRI BHAGABAN MAJHI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMEN'U AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry has proposed to raise the water charegs for industry;

(b) if so, the reasons which led to submit such Proposal; and

(c) the details of steps taken to avoid frequent increase in water charges for the indsutry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Water Cess is levied to augment the financial resources of sttate Pollution Control Boards. The present responsibilities of State Boards are con tinuing to increase resulting in require ment of additional resources. Further, the level of existing cess rates has not proved sufficient to motivate consumers to reduce water consumption. This has been confirmed through several studies. These studies strongly argue that the water charges should be commensurate with the cost of effluent treatment, and push consumers to promote water con-servalon by making industries pay more for higher water consumption. It is thus necessary that these charges are revised, whenever required, in relation to the cost of effeuent treatment.

Creation cf a movement to save Historical Monuments

4544. SHRI SYED STBTEY RAZI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Environmental Society has demanded creation of a movement to save the country's his-torical mom.aients like the Taj Mahal.

(b) if so, the details therefor, with objectives;

(c) whether a large number of archa-eological sites and historical monuments of the country are getting affected by variations in weather, rainfall and different pollutents in the air;

(d) if so, the names of each, with locations, and reasons for variations in each case;

(e) whether Government propose to involve experts from regula'.ory bodies of Government Research Institutions, Universities, Industries and Non-Govern-mental organisatioss to work out plans and programmes to (preserve the Taj Mahal, on a sustained basis; and

tf) if so, the details thereof and if not, 'he reason's therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b) The Indian Environmental Society had issued a press note stressing the need to bring together varioais experts from th*e* regulatory bodies of the Governmen,t, Resaarch Inititutlians, Universties, Industries and non-governmental organisations to work out plans and programmes to preserve the country's historical monuments.

(c) and (d) The effects of weather and rainfall on the archaeological sites and historical monuments of the country are a continuous procefe, which have been going on for centuries. Environmental Pollution also has an adverse effect on marble, sandstone and other building materials. However, no specific signs of accelerated decay of the monuments due to environmental pollution have been conclusively proved so far.

(e) and (f) In compliance with th© directions of the Supreme Court, Gov ernment has already constituted an

Expert CommiKee under the Chairmanship of Dr. S. Varadarajan to undertake a survey of the Agra-Mathura trapezium and to submit a report regarding the sources of pollution in the; trapezium and the necessary measures to control them. The members of this committee are persons of scientific eminence and reiresentatives from Government organisations.

Search of as India Bound Ship by the US Navy

4545. SHRI K. R. MALKANI:
SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL i AIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the U.S. Navy intercepted and searched the Ship Gulf Splendour, manned by an all-Indian crew and carrying 2,200 tonnes of dried dates from Abadan, Iran, tor India, as reported in 'The Pioneer' dated the Sta February, 1995;

(b) whether the Ship held in Umm-ali-Quwain in U.A.E.;

(c) whether the USA accuses India of having loaded the stuff *in* Iraq; and

(d) tf so, whether it is an offence under any International law or U.N. resolution to trade food-stuffs with Iraq?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d) The Ship "Gulf Splendour" intercepted by the US Navy has since been released. The US authorities, have stated that the ship, which was owned by a private company, had loaded datels in Iraq. Under the UN Security Council resolution 661, import of all commodities and products originating in Iraq or exported therefrom is prohibited.

Bilateral Relations with Maldives

4546. SHRI BHAGABAN MAJHI: WiU the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether steps have been taken by Government for strengthening bila teral ties with Maldives; and

(b) if so, the details of assistance! offered by Government to that island country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA);
(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The assistance offered by the Government of India to Maldives includes ongoing cooperation in the manning, equipping and functioning of the 200-bed Indira Gandhi Memorial hospital; the construction and equipping of an institute for vocational and technical, training and in human resour-cesi development, and prsservation of monuments. In addition Govenmient of India offers scholarships for training of Maldivian personnel in technical, engineering and vocational courses. Proposal for cooperation in the fields of distance education, and environment are also under discussion.

Visit of Iranian President

4547. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be _pleas-ed to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Iranian President visited India in the third week of April, 1995;

(b) if so, the gist of talks the foreign dignitary had with Government;

(c) the leaders, the foreign dignitary met during his visit to the country;